



Dr. Emily Taylor, dean of women at the University of Kansas, consults with a student. Photo courtesy of the Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas Libraries, Lawrence.

EXPERIMENTAL AUTONOMY: Dean Emily Taylor and the Women's Movement at the University of Kansas

by Kelly C. Sartorius

In 1958 Dr. Emily Taylor (1915–2004), dean of women at the University of Kansas (KU), pressed senior women to accept keys to their dormitories and sororities. Although issuance of keys on college campuses today is a mere detail at the beginning of the fall semester, in the 1950s that was not the case. Instead, college women found their access to university housing constrained by a complex set of rules created by women's student government and ultimately determined by administrators. In Lawrence, Kansas, Dean Taylor's efforts eventually made KU the second campus in the country to allow senior women keys and the first to allow all women the freedom to come and go as they pleased while in college.¹ As a university administrator, Taylor laid the groundwork for the eventual elimination of the university rules—parietals—that functioned in place of parental oversight for female students.

Taylor's dissolution of regulations received little attention in 1958. At the time, Taylor ranked as one of the youngest deans of women at a major public institution of higher education in the United States. Nevertheless she broached the possibility of keys for senior women in her second year at KU, though she held no tenure at the university and was the only high-level female administrator on campus. At this same time the position of dean of women had begun

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1. The first institution of higher education to provide women with keys was located in Colorado. Emily Taylor, interview by author, summer 1997, Lawrence, Kansas. The author has not been able to determine which school implemented this policy prior to the University of Kansas. Taylor stated that KU was the first to provide all women keys. Taylor, interview by author, December 13–14, 2003, Lawrence, Kansas. All interviews by the author are in the personal collection of the author.

to disappear nationally as deans of students took over their responsibilities.² Any of these elements might have derailed Taylor's plans. Instead the keys she gave her students quietly opened the door for significant change in 1966, when the university eliminated curfews for most KU women. At that point, many parents and taxpayers howled in protest. Letters of opposition poured into Chancellor W. Clarke Wescoe's office. Not surprisingly, Taylor's leadership came under scrutiny. Historical studies of KU student life have noted the 1966 furor over eliminating closing hours for women's residences, but little attention has been paid to how the elimination of parietals began and how Taylor seeded a flourishing women's movement at KU.³

Kansas, a conservative state in the nation's center, seemed an unlikely locale for the activism of the women's movement, civil rights, and student protest. However, the state experienced the same tensions reverberating nationwide in post-World War II America. Aside from the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision to desegregate schools, *Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas*, the state also experienced civil rights and student protests. In Wichita, students carried out drugstore sit-ins predating those in Greensboro, North Carolina. At KU, bombings, arson, and two deaths—one of a KU student—placed the campus in the midst of the turmoil facing more commonly referenced schools like Berkeley and Kent State. Furthermore, by the early 1970s, a group of women, the February Sisters, protested the lack of daycare and access to women's healthcare at KU by taking over the East Asian Language building until their demands were met.⁴

2. Kathryn Nemeth Tuttle, "What Became of the Dean of Women?: Changing Roles for Women Administrators in American Higher Education, 1940–1980" (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 1996); Anne Hoopingarner Ritter, former Associated Women Students (AWS) student leader, provided the information regarding Taylor as a young dean. Ritter, interview by author, February 17, 2009, Arlington, Virginia.

3. One reason for this research gap is that the dean of women's files are sparse for Taylor's tenure at KU. Taylor stated that she destroyed the majority of her files because she did not want disciplinary cases to become public. Although others have completed short interviews with Taylor, the author conducted interviews over a period of six years in Lawrence, Kansas. In addition, on subjects about which Taylor did not elaborate, the author's interviews with former employees and students have been extremely helpful. For discussions of the student movements at KU, see Beth Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland: Politics, Culture, and the Sexual Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999); Rusty L. Monhollon, "This is America?": *The Sixties in Lawrence, Kansas* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

4. For further discussion of the civil rights movement in Kansas, see Gretchen Cassel Eick, *Dissent in Wichita: The Civil Rights Movement in the Midwest, 1954–1972* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001). On the February Sisters see also Monhollon, "This is America?"; Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland*.

Within this context, Taylor's example bears on several historiographical issues: the development of the second wave of the women's movement, the roots of student social unrest in higher education, and the primacy of student-initiated resistance to campus authorities during the late 1960s. When considering cultural change in the twentieth century, early women's historians believed that little feminist activism existed between women's suffrage—the first wave of the women's movement—and the second wave in the late 1960s with the rise of women's liberation. These two "waves" reflected different feminist approaches, with the first illustrating liberal feminism working to equalize women's status through existing governmental and social structures and the second seated in radical feminist action, which proposed profound transformation by rejecting society's norms as male-defined and fundamentally sexist. In the 1980s, gender historians began to clarify this vision by revealing that women's activism existed between the "first" and "second waves," particularly during the post-war consensus years.⁵

In other scholarship, historians of student social movements on college campuses in the late 1960s have maintained that student movements began on the east and west coasts and consisted of student resistance against university administrations. Like the scholarship on the women's movement, recent research on campus unrest has shown more nuance in student activism than scholars initially believed. For instance, historians have recently published local histories showing that student protest occurred in the heartland of the United States contemporaneously with that on the coasts.⁶ However,

5. Books such as Marty Jezer's *The Dark Ages: Life in the United States 1945–1960* (Boston, Mass.: South End Press, 1982) encouraged the idea that the 1950s were a time of repression. For further discussion of women's activism during the 1950s, see Leila J. Rupp and Verta Taylor, *Survival In the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Susan Ware, "American Women in the 1950s: Nonpartisan Politics and Women's Politicization," in *Women, Politics and Change*, eds. Louise A. Tilly and Patricia Gurin (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1990); Linda Eisenmann, *Higher Education for Women in Postwar America, 1945–1965* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Amy Swerdlow, *Women Strike for Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Joanne Meyerowitz, ed., *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945–1960* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Temple University Press, 1994).

6. Douglas Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) shows that at the University of Texas (UT) the "movement" began contemporaneously with protests on other campuses located on the East and West coasts. It is important to note that the UT efforts were fostered in Christian activism rather than rooted in the communist and Jewish activism seen in the northeast. Both Bailey and Monhollon disproved that student movements originated solely on the coasts, along with Mary Ann Wynkoop, *Dissent in the Heartland: The Sixties at Indiana University* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).



Kansas, a conservative state in the nation's center, seemed an unlikely locale for the activism of the women's movement, civil rights, and student protest. And indeed, female students at KU in the 1950s and 1960s did not initiate social change on campus. Pictured here two female students study in their KU dorm room.

these historians of unrest tend to see the 1950s and early 1960s as an age of consensus and traditional gender roles interrupted only in the late 1960s by a surge from enlightened, usually male, students.⁷ These same historians often posited that youth opposed university administrators who resisted reform and tried to quell

demonstrations against war, racial exclusion, and the second wave of women's liberation.⁸

This article calls for closer examination of how the relationships between administrators and students shaped both the women's movement and the social movements that manifested on college campuses across

7. For instance, Rossinow, asserted that the "somewhat surprising emergence of a 'new' political left following the politically conservative era of the 1950s. . . . stemmed from white youth participation in civil rights activism in the early 1950s and 1960s." Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 1. Also, Renée Lansley argued that the majority of the studies of student movements on campus focused on free speech and Vietnam protest as primarily male-driven events. Renée N. Lansley, "College Women or College Girls?: Gender, Sexuality and In Loco Parentis on Campus" (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2004), ii–iii, 3. For further discussion of the marginalization of the women's movement within student protest historical scholarship, see endnote 4 in Alice Echols, *Shaky Ground: The '60s and Its Aftershocks* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 237. Echols also discussed (p. 52) recent scholarship questioning the assumption that the late 1960s were an "exceptional decade" fostering a surprising change.

8. For further discussion of student movements, see Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); David Burner, *Making Peace with the 60s* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996); Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (Toronto, Canada: Bantam Books, 1987); Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching: The Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Kenneth J. Heineman, *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era* (New York: New York University Press, 1993); Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (New York: Random House, 1973); Melvin Small et al., *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1992); Irwin Unger, *The Movement: A History of the American New Left* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

the country. As this case study will show, Taylor not only fostered women's student activism at KU, but she also personified a link between the results of the earlier liberal women's movement and the later wave of radical feminist activism in the late 1960s. Although women's subordinate experiences in civil rights and new left organizations are widely understood to have created young women's political consciousness in the 1960s, this article illustrates that women's activism at KU grew from administrative influence. Furthermore, this case study provides new insights about the evolution of feminist action in higher education during the 1950s, an area that has been "under examined and undervalued," according to historian Linda Eisenmann.⁹ The events at KU show that female students did not initiate social change on campus in the 1950s and early 1960s, but rather that Taylor pushed women to reconsider their normative views of gender roles. Taylor exemplified liberal feminist activism in the 1950s on a college campus in the heartland. Her example, though, also reveals the more nuanced nature of student movements on other campuses as her activities do not support the assumption that students achieved all change in this period by resisting university administrators.

The consensus culture of post-war America shaped the relationship between student life and the profession of student personnel administration in the late 1940s and 1950s. The Cold War created a society focused on stable domesticity both in public policy and in homes across the country. Marriage rates rose and the baby boom resulted. In higher education, Progressive Era advances for women's education were rolled back.¹⁰ Across the country,

9. Linda Eisenmann, "A Time of Quiet Activism: Research, Practice and Policy in American Women's Higher Education, 1945-1965," *History of Education Quarterly* 45 (Spring 2005): 17. The argument that the second wave of the women's movement was born from women's participation in civil rights protests and the new left belongs to Sara M. Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement & the New Left* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1979). See also, Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 23-50. Monhollon, "This is America?," 200, stated that the women's movement at KU also came from these experiences, though he also credited Taylor with the growth of liberal feminist views at KU.

10. The post-war consensus culture is understood to have existed between 1945 and 1965, although it is often referred to as "the 1950s," when it was at its height. Two books of many that examine this culture are: Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1988); and Elizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003). Lynn D. Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990) dates this period from 1890 to 1920.

universities met calls for changes to the curriculum for female students. Home economics programs grew rapidly from their mid-1800s roots and post-WWII enrollment trends showed a decrease in core liberal arts and professional programs and increases in areas like nutrition and family studies that emphasized domesticity. As female undergraduates increasingly enrolled in such programs, according to the historian Elaine Tyler May, "older professional women watched helplessly as early feminist gains were depleted. . . . But at the time, those who bemoaned the trends were overshadowed by those who welcomed the domestication of women's education as a way of meeting a need expressed by many educated women who found few opportunities for careers."¹¹ Although home economics reflected a serious effort based on scientific research to professionalize women's place in the home, by the 1950s marriage preparation became the subtext for many women's education. By 1956, the year KU hired Taylor, one quarter of all urban, white, college women married while attending college in part because it was increasingly difficult for women to find professional positions and their chances to marry decreased the longer they waited. At KU the women's 1953-1954 handbook written by student leaders included more tips on social life than on academics. In the "Housing" section under "Him Time," it informed freshmen that "since none of us like to be 'caught' with p.j.'s, pinned-up hair, or cold-creamed faces, we have specified calling hours for men."¹² The handbook authors clearly thought putting a woman's best appearance forward and controlling access to female living quarters critically important for campus success.

These realities, along with the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, significantly affected women's enrollments and the production of female graduates.¹³ This act, commonly called the GI bill, brought large numbers of men to campuses across the country and changed university demographics. In 1920, women constituted 47.3 percent of enrollments, but by the mid-1950s the proportion decreased to a third of the student body. At KU alone, between 1945 and 1949 a

11. May, *Homeward Bound*, 79-83; quotations on 81 and 83.

12. Associated Women Students, "KU Cues: Official Handbook for Women," 1953-54, 1954/55 folder, Chronological Records, 1947/48-1964/65, Associated Women Students, Box 1, University Archives, Record Group 67/12, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence (hereafter cited as "AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12").

13. The GI bill resulted in the "displacement" of many women according to Linda Eisenmann, *Higher Education for Women in Postwar America*, 54-55.



After WWII marriage preparation became the subtext for many women's education. By the mid-1950s one quarter of all urban, white, college women married while attending college in part because it was increasingly difficult for women to find professional positions and their chances to marry decreased the longer they waited. Above men and women attend class at KU in 1950.

"flood of veterans threatened to drown the institution." Between 1945 and the 1959–1960 school year, enrollments increased from 6,300 to over 11,700 students. In the 1947–1948 academic year, the number of students spiked when veterans numbered 6,488 of 10,900 KU students. In 1946 Chancellor Deane W. Malott said he welcomed all GIs at KU, noting that he thought female students would be pleased to have veterans on campus and that the men would "in turn attract more girls [to KU]. Thus . . . [enrollment] expansion spirals upward."¹⁴ For established academic women who saw advances decline during the Great Depression, these dramatic increases in male enrollment meant that the gains of the Progressive Era for women in various professional fields further eroded. In addition, the percentage of women earning PhDs declined and continued to do so throughout the 1950s.¹⁵

For university administrators, the rising enrollments increased their workload and rearranged the historical organizational structure of campus administration. Traditionally the counterpart to the dean of men, the dean of women often held one of the only high-level

professional administrative positions available to women at coeducational state universities.¹⁶ Both dean positions began as dormitory disciplinarians providing oversight on curfews and student behavior in the late nineteenth century, with the dean of women enforcing rules of conduct in order to prohibit sexual activity and ensure female students' virtue. The dean of men handled all male student needs while the dean of women managed female student concerns in what was a sex-segregated system. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the two roles evolved into administrative posts that reported to the chief university officer. Their responsibilities revolved around counseling, the extracurricular portion of students' experiences, and discipline.

The influx of veterans, however, caused many universities to focus on male students as administrators wrestled with inadequate classroom space as well as limited student housing. This transfer of attention, combined with several other factors, caused universities to eliminate or weaken dean of women positions. In the 1920s, schools began receiving higher accreditation marks when student personnel operations consolidated under a single dean of students. In addition, the

14. Clifford S. Griffin, *The University of Kansas: A History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1974), 502, 503, 530, 617.

15. Tuttle, "What Became of the Dean of Women," 85. Susan Levine, *Degrees of Equality: The American Association of University Women and the Challenge of Twentieth-Century Feminism* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Temple University Press, 1995), 91.

16. Deans of women were not the only women in academic administrations. At land grant institutions, deans of colleges or departments of home economics were often women.

A.W.S. Regulations For University Women 1954-55

THESE RULES AND REGULATIONS ARE MADE BY THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS WOMEN THROUGH THE RULES AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE ASSOCIATED WOMEN STUDENTS

Women's Creed

I believe in the women of the University; in their ideals and sincerity of purpose.
Because I am one of them I will strive to be open-minded and charitable.
I will be honest with myself. For then it follows that I will be honest in my class work and with other people.
I will support the activities of my University in the spirit of service.
I will remember that I am here primarily to study and to learn to think.
I will take time for friendships and pleasure in simple things.
I will broaden my sympathy and interests to include the life which is outside the campus.
Above all I will make my standards such that I should be willing to have every woman on the campus adopt them as hers.

This cover of an Associated Women Students handbook from 1954–1955 reflects at least a few ideas Taylor would agree with when she became KU's dean of women in 1956, particularly that female students were at the university "to study and to learn to think." At the same time, however, handbooks from this period generally focused more on social life than on academics, informing female students, for example, that "since none of us like to be 'caught' with p.j.'s, pinned-up hair, or cold-creamed faces, we have specified calling hours for men." Cover courtesy of the Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas Libraries, Lawrence.

Depression forced administrative cuts that encouraged universities to place student personnel under a single administrator. As a result, deans of women positions began to disappear. Between 1940 and the end of 1959 these forces caused numerous deans of women to lose their jobs to the new dean of students who was invariably a man, often the former dean of men. Moreover, in 1940, 86 percent of deans of women reported directly to the chief officer at their institution. By 1962, only 30 percent had the same access to the primary decision-maker. The

result of this shift in organization dramatically changed the influence of women in coeducational university administrations. Deans of women assumed other titles such as "counselor," as they moved on organizational charts from positions parallel to deans of men to posts supervised by them. The adjustment meant that the only high-level female administrator on many campuses lost her position on the major committees charting the direction of the university. Until women began assuming other faculty and administrative roles on campuses in the 1980s, the new structure systematically excluded their voices at the top of many coeducational campuses across the country.¹⁷

At KU, however, the influence of the dean of women did not weaken despite the local presence of national factors. In June 1953, Chancellor Franklin Murphy—himself a young chancellor in his thirties—followed the national trend and streamlined his student personnel staff "in a move to enlarge and coordinate personnel services for students" by promoting Dean of Men Laurence C. Woodruff to the new position of dean of students. Although the organizational chart showed the dean of women as subordinate to Woodruff, Murphy nevertheless continued to allow the dean of women direct access to the chancellor's office, as noted in the press release announcing the change: "'This move in no way affects the right of direct access to the chancellor's office possessed by the dean of women,' Dr. Murphy said. 'She retains the primary responsibility for women's activities.'"¹⁸ In 1955, when Taylor's predecessor, Martha Peterson, announced that she had accepted the dean of women post at the University of Wisconsin, Woodruff used her resignation as the opportunity to argue for the creation of an associate position reporting to him for all women's student affairs. Woodruff asserted: "Such a change of course is not at all acceptable to the militant suffragette but is the plan currently being followed by most of the institutions which we might like to emulate." When Murphy initially offered employment to Taylor,

17. Tuttle, "What Became of the Dean of Women," 3–4, 80–99. Further discussion of such points may be found in Dorothy Truex, "Education of Women, the Student Personnel Profession and the New Feminism," *Journal of National Association of Women Deans and Counselors* 35 (Fall 1971): 13–21.

18. In this reorganization of student administrators, Murphy also promoted the assistant dean of men, Donald K. Alderson, to dean of men. KU News Bureau, June 27, 1953, Dean of Students folder, Correspondence, Department: Aids and Awards—Dormitories 1953/54, Chancellor's Office, Franklin D. Murphy, Box 1, University Archives, RG 2/11/5, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence (hereafter cited as "Murphy Papers, UA, RG 2/11/5").



When Taylor's predecessor announced she was leaving KU, then Dean of Students Laurence Woodruff used her resignation as the opportunity to argue that the dean of women should become an associate position reporting to him, asserting that "such a change of course is not at all acceptable to the militant suffragette but is the plan currently being followed by most of the institutions which we might like to emulate." When Taylor was initially offered the job she was asked to report to Woodruff, pictured here talking with a group of KU students. She refused the position under those terms. Photo courtesy of the Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas Libraries, Lawrence.

he asked her to report to Woodruff. She refused the position under those terms, requesting a direct report to the chancellor.¹⁹ By complying with her request, Murphy rebuffed Woodruff and instead solidified a woman's voice in the KU administration.²⁰

Salary data also reflected Murphy's support for a strong dean of women. During the 1957–1958 school year, he paid Taylor a salary of \$8,000, while Dean of Men Don Alderson (the former assistant dean of men) received only \$6,700. These salaries illustrate the informal operation of KU's student personnel administration most clearly. Despite their titles Woodruff functioned as the dean of men with Alderson as an assistant responsible for discipline. The dean of women remained responsible to the chancellor and she eventually delegated disciplinary

activities to an assistant as well. In fact, Taylor recalled later that people often thought Woodruff was the dean of men, and Alderson was the assistant dean of men.²¹

The personnel assigned to the two offices further illustrate the differences in the roles of dean of men and dean of women at KU. Taylor began with one assistant in 1956–1957. By 1975, when she left KU, a total of eleven salary lines and a graduate assistant comprised her staff. In comparison, the dean of men's office relied primarily on graduate student help. Taylor amassed a larger staff than the dean of men and acquired significant influence at a level similar to the dean of students. At KU, reorganizing student affairs did not result in the dean of women losing her influential position as she did at other institutions. Instead, by continuing the sex-segregated structure, Murphy provided Taylor a platform to implement activities for female students and to experiment with her vision of fostering women leaders.

19. Woodruff to Murphy, March 8, 1956, Dean of Students folder, Correspondence, Department: Medicine—Zoology, 1955–56, Murphy Papers, Box 3, UA, RG 2/11/5; Taylor interview, December 13–14, 2003.

20. Murphy wrote to Woodruff to deny Woodruff's request to eliminate the "dean of women" title in favor of an assistant dean or an associate dean title. Murphy noted that it was "desirable to clothe the woman in the office with the additional dignity that goes with the phrase, 'dean of women,'" and also suggested that "our system has worked quite well since 1952." Murphy to Woodruff, March 16, 1956, Dean of Students folder, Murphy Papers, Box 3, UA, RG 2/11/5.

21. In 1957–1958 Woodruff received a salary of \$10,500; Taylor \$8,000; and Alderson \$6,700. Even with tentative increases suggested for the 1958–1959 school year, Woodruff was slated to earn \$11,000; Taylor \$8,500; and Alderson \$7,000. Department: All Student Council—Chancellor's Office (Lawton) 1957/58, Murphy Papers, UA, Box 1, RG 2/11/5; Taylor interview, December 13–14, 2003.



Salary data from early in Taylor's tenure at KU reflects that the administration supported a strong dean of women. During the 1957–1958 school year, Taylor was paid a salary of \$8,000, while Dean of Men Don Alderson, who effectively operated as an assistant to Dean of Students Laurence Woodruff, received only \$6,700. Photo of Alderson courtesy of the Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas Libraries, Lawrence.

Taylor's influence and the effectiveness of her staff were determined by both her administrative philosophy of student self-governance and the wider assumption that student personnel administrators fulfilled university obligation for *in loco parentis* through parietal rules. In other words, they acted as university agents to maintain discipline in the place of students' parents. Most universities developed a dual system of rules for student conduct. One set, governed by the dean of men, applied to all students, including women. The other set concerned only women and was overseen by the dean of women. As the forces of consolidation in student personnel pushed men to the top of the administrative structure, the two-fold set of rules remained. Often, these rules were peer-reviewed—or “self-governed”—by students through student organizations. This structure allowed university administrators to ascertain student opinions on various issues by crafting a “channeling procedure between it [student government] and the administration of the University.” However, administrators retained their right to “veto” student

initiatives, and students—particularly women—viewed them as the ultimate authority.²²

Under such an arrangement in the 1950s, KU women were accustomed to curfews that mirrored the types of control that a parent commonly imposed when they lived at home. At KU, the Associated Women Students (AWS)—a student organization for women—governed residence halls and sororities, overseeing women's student life on campus.²³ As part of a national organization, the Intercollegiate Association of Women Students (IAWS), the AWS implemented numerous rules for all women's living groups, ranging from a code of closing hours (curfews) for the housing units to regulations governing men's calling hours, women's calling hours at men's living quarters, “quiet hours” for study and sleeping, and “late permissions” for returning home later than curfew. Enforcement of rules was also heavily codified by the AWS, with minor violations handled by one's residence and “severe” or repeated cases by the AWS judiciary board, which consisted of AWS student officers and the dean of women.²⁴ Officers of a living unit, housemothers, and dormitory counselors often referred a woman to the judiciary board for what would be judged trivial infractions by today's standards, such as arriving home between one and five minutes late for curfew several times. Ultimately, at KU and universities across the country, responsibility for ensuring discipline among female students belonged to the dean of women and safety provided the rationale for the rules. Although security was one factor, these rules primarily limited unsupervised time for male and female students in order to enforce social norms against premarital sex.²⁵

22. Emily Taylor, “Optimum Use of Students in Faculty Committees,” *Journal of the National Association of Deans of Women* 17 (March 1953): 126–29. At KU in 1943, students and administration agreed on a new student government constitution that created an All Student Council (ASC) of thirty members to set the policy for student life. The Board of Regents approved the program, with the stipulation that all ASC regulations would be subject to the chancellor's veto. Griffin, *The University of Kansas*, 637.

23. “A.W.S. Regulations for University of Kansas Women, 1958–59,” 1957/58–1958/59 folder, Taylor Correspondence, Records 1952/53–1965/66, Dean of Women's Papers, Box 1, University Archives, RG 53/0, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence. By 1958 the *Lawrence Daily Journal-World* reported that the AWS had grown to a significant stature on campus in its first twelve years: “AWS Grows to Its Present Stature From Small Group,” *Lawrence Daily Journal-World*, September 1958, clipping, 1958/59 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12.

24. “AWS Regulations for University Women, 1956–57,” 1956/57 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12.

25. Tuttle, “What Became of the Dean of Women?,” 25–27; Lansley, “College Women or College Girls?,” ii–iii, 1–5; Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland*, 78–79.

In contrast, the rules for men nationally and at KU included no curfews or closing hours. Unlike women, men possessed keys to their dormitories, fraternities, and rooming houses, and came and went as they pleased.²⁶ At KU men's rules were few, focusing primarily on appropriate and legal consumption of intoxicating beverages and proper behavior at such social events as dances and other university extracurricular activities. At KU officers of the All Student Council (ASC), under the direction of the dean of men, set these rules that applied to every student. Similar to the AWS, the ASC punished infractions with a disciplinary board. Because women were governed by both AWS and ASC rules, their extracurricular lives were tightly controlled. However, the ASC rules left men largely free to do as they chose with only abbreviated regulations to govern their behavior. When comparing the two sets of rules at KU and other universities, it is clear that the *in loco parentis* structure functioned by policing women's campus life with the assumption that once the women returned to their housing, most men would as well. Thus, the women's rules existed primarily to create and maintain gender role boundaries, circumscribing women's daily activities and providing a process for the university administration to enforce propriety. This inequitable application of the concept of *in loco parentis* meant that "socially acceptable standards" were maintained largely through the discipline of women rather than of men.

Although some women's historians have labeled sex-segregation in coeducational institutions as limiting for women, Lynn Gordon argued that the first AWS chapter at the University of California-Berkeley actually provided a base of power and a "means of pushing for equality and education" during the Progressive Era. The separation of women from men provided women influence as they developed their leadership skills and built support for their initiatives as a group. Without men in their organizations, social norms did not relegate women to non-leadership roles. Instead, they determined their own issues and worked to achieve desired results. The segregation provided power to the women Gordon studied.²⁷

Taylor used the AWS chapter at KU in a manner similar to the one Gordon examined at the Berkeley campus. Taylor approached the student government group as a venue for her agenda. In fact, she noted



Taylor closely guided the female student leaders she worked with. She met at her home with the Associated Women Students Senate president on Sundays or in her office on Mondays in preparation for the weekly AWS Senate meetings. "She fed me ideas," said Anne Hoopingarner Ritter, AWS president during the 1960-1961 academic year. "I knew exactly what I was supposed to do when I ran the meeting. . . . I felt very enabled and knowledgeable. Looking back, I was her disciple." Photograph of Hoopingarner from the 1961 Jayhawker yearbook.

that the KU position interested her because the AWS reported only to the dean of women and the chancellor for administrative approvals. She knew that under this arrangement she could "get more done." In her 1955 article, "Use of Students on Faculty Committees," Taylor argued that student personnel administrators should routinely provide student leaders with opportunities to influence and to make university policy. She envisioned governing bodies as a way for students to help design campus procedures in more than name only. Although it was controversial on most campuses to allow student involvement in disciplinary matters, she advocated that student groups set general policies and that administrators implement the policies privately in individual cases in order to protect students' privacy.²⁸ Thus, Taylor saw women's student government as a training ground for

26. Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland*, 78-80.

27. Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era*, 84.

28. Taylor interview, December 13-14, 2003; Taylor, "Optimum Use of Students in Faculty Committees," 126-29.

leadership and a venue for female students to define their own policies. For her, self-governance was not about discipline. It was about self-determination. When reflecting on her career, Taylor recalled that nationally AWS advisors “kept talking about self-governing as if that’s what they were doing, governing somebody.” Taylor disagreed. She believed that AWS should have been “devising ways through . . . programming to help women understand more about the world and be more independent and learn more leadership skills.”²⁹ Taylor wanted to provide women the opportunity to become autonomous by developing personal behavioral standards and the confidence to apply them in their own lives without an authority dictating their personal actions.

The idea of women’s self-governance begged philosophical questions for all deans of women as they sought to define and fulfill the purpose of woman’s education. Because the student personnel profession rooted itself in the liberal tradition of educators like John Dewey, who focused on holistic counseling—treating each individual student as a whole person in order to develop his or her full potential—deans of women like Taylor found gender role expectations at the heart of their job. “At each stage of advisement, (women) deans and their advisees were forced to ask, ‘Education for what?’”³⁰ For deans of women, the practice of student administration meant maximizing a woman’s capabilities. Queries regarding women’s “full potential” meant juxtaposing post-war social expectations that assumed women would become wives and mothers with an educational philosophy that would prepare them for careers and emphasize intellectual development. During the 1950s and early 1960s, the *Journal of the National Association of Deans of Women* filled its pages with articles about balancing social expectations with educational and career intent. Each female dean faced these difficulties regarding the objective of women’s education, although most avoided “feminism” due to controversy surrounding the subject.³¹

Taylor set out to have her students consider why—and for what purpose—they attended university. In her 1955 dissertation, Taylor analyzed perceptions and stereotypes of employed women in periodical short fiction. Her purpose was to better prepare counselors to

advise female students regarding vocational options by having them understand the preconceptions that such students held from representations of working women in popular culture. As she stated in her study:

There was once a day when these matters posed few problems of significance for counseling of women students in contrast with men. Convention defined the roles of men and women much more clearly than it now does, and the role of counselor was correspondingly simpler. . . . Men and women students do, however, have differential counseling needs. For example, men students are not ordinarily faced with the necessity for making any choice between marriage and a career. The great majority are expected to assume the obligations of both. Most women still do make a choice, or at least believe that they are making one. They often find themselves, however, uncertain about their desires, forced by unforeseen circumstances to assume unanticipated roles, and faced with cultural inconsistencies which increase their difficulties. . . . boys and girls in our society are taught similar values; at the same time, girls may accept a stereotype of themselves that presents them as universally desirous of marriage, homemaking, and childcare, a concept that guides and influences their conduct.³²

Taylor believed a counselor should clarify the “advantages and disadvantages” of women’s choices. In fact, she labeled the consideration of a woman’s options as a “duty” for those advising female students.

At KU this philosophy underpinned her actions, programs, and approach as she exchanged the traditional understanding of “self-governance” for what she termed personal responsibility in AWS. Before Taylor’s arrival, the AWS Senate planned to spend more time on rules in order to clarify expectations. Taylor took a different approach and began to initiate her vision for leadership through student governance.³³ She wanted to spend less

29. Emily Taylor, interview by author, July 4, 1997, Lawrence, Kansas.

30. Tuttle, “What Became of the Dean of Women?” 2, 9, 14–15, 25–27, 39 (quotations), 41–42.

31. *Ibid.*, 86–87.

32. Mary Emily Taylor, “Employed Women in Recent Periodical Short Fiction: The Fictionalized Portrait of Employed Women Projected Against a Background of Factual Data” (EdD diss., Indiana University, 1955), 1–2.

33. In spring 1956, AWS senators recommended “that we choose the girls to work on the Rules and Regulations Committee next fall

time discussing rules and more on intellectual endeavors. To this end she first reorganized the AWS by changing the concerns with which the group dealt. She added two new committees, "Bright Women," which researched alumnae with careers, and the "Roles of Women" group that examined women's place in society. She hosted lecturers on the "Problem of Women in Political Action" and the "Status of Women" in the United States. These topics contrasted starkly with KU students' traditional programming that included a fashion show and a "Best Dressed Girl" contest. In addition, she added an annual scholarship dinner to reward academic success.³⁴

Second, Taylor restructured the disciplinary function of AWS by changing the "judiciary board" to the "board of standards." This change in the judiciary board's name signified Taylor's desire to eliminate the punitive tone regarding parietals. In addition, Taylor assigned the board of standards to an assistant dean, thereby delegating disciplinary policy issues and removing herself as a figurative parent. Taylor further revised the disciplinary operations when she and an AWS committee rewrote the AWS constitution outside regular senate meetings. These changes placed more disciplinary power with the student residence organizations so that the governing body of women's living groups resolved their own disciplinary infractions unless the behavioral problems were frequent or particularly significant. The revisions provided more autonomy and responsibility to the women's housing units. (Later, during a rules convention, the women would actually attempt to return these powers to the dean of women's office.) The AWS Senate, accustomed to the administration setting student disciplinary policy, adopted these revisions with

and have them work at it all year instead of just at the last of the year." AWS Senate Minutes, May 8, 1956, 1955-56 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12; Taylor, "Employed Women in Recent Periodical Short Fiction," 3.

34. The changes to the AWS programming are found in: 1957 All Women's Day materials, 1957/58 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12; "AWSenateRetreatMinutes," April 26, 1960, Taylor's home, 1959/1960, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12; "AWS Orientates New Students" and "Committee to Study 'Bright Women' in Kansas," *University Daily Kansan*, September 28, 1961; see also, clippings, July-November 1961 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12. Taylor's interest in career women was evident in her dissertation topic. Also, Taylor's correspondence with Kate Hevner Mueller, professor of education, Indiana University, illustrates her desire to change the student conversation topics to more intellectual ones. Mueller to Taylor, October 3, 1956, 1956/57 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12. Finally, in preparation for All-Women's Day, Taylor asked the AWS leadership to review documents such as "Reference Data on the Status of Women in America. Part I. Legal Discrimination Against Women. Part II. Discrimination in Politics," 1956/57 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12. This reading assignment shows Taylor actively educating women about sexism.

almost no discussion. The minutes simply noted that the changes occurred. As a result, each housing unit could determine its own behavioral standards for itself within the parameters of the parietals.

Finally, Taylor expanded AWS membership from women in organized housing units to include all females attending KU, including those living off campus.³⁵ As a result, any restructuring of women's student life would then apply to all women. Through all of these changes, Taylor set the stage for a shift from discussion of parietals to scholarly conversation and intellectual development. This transition would clear the way for counseling of women that considered employment and other options beyond the conventional confines of gender roles.

As she redefined the AWS, Taylor established an advising pattern that would support her efforts to mentor female leaders. By personality, Taylor demanded excellence from the students with whom she worked. One remarked later in life that mentorship by Taylor was like being "a post under a pile driver."³⁶ Taylor told women who wanted counseling about boyfriends that she had nontraditional ideas:

I warned them that my advice would be very unconventional and that I had no sympathy for many things. . . . [One] young woman said she wanted to talk about . . . this awful story about this fellow that she was dating [who] was treating her so badly and [she] just went on and on. And I said . . . no I didn't say anything for awhile, I just listened. And then she said, "What do you think I should do?" And I said, "Well, I think you should get yourself another man."³⁷

In another case, Taylor advised a woman distraught over her Protestant parents' displeasure with her Catholic boyfriend. Taylor asked the woman her age, told the student that she was old enough to make up her own mind, and that she was marrying the man and her parents were not. Taylor never spoke with the student again, but noticed her engagement announcement not

35. "1955-56 AWS Judiciary Board Report," 1955-56 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12; assistant Dean Patterson is listed as the advisor to the board of standards, "Board of Standards 1959-60," 1959/60 folder; AWS Senate Minutes, December 4, 1956, and March 5, 1957, 1956/57 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12; Ritter interview.

36. Genevieve Taylor McMahon, sister of Emily Taylor, interview by author, December 31, 2007, Lawrence, Kansas.

37. Emily Taylor, interview by author, June 4, 1998, Lawrence, Kansas.

long after in the newspaper.³⁸ In short, Taylor's nonsense responses to students, faculty, and other administrators determined her reputation as a significant force on campus. In particular, if she thought a point was nonsensical, she quickly—and often bluntly—pointed out what she saw as problematic logic.

In addition to her direct counseling and professional style, Taylor closely guided the AWS. She met at her home with the AWS Senate president on Sundays or in her office on Mondays in preparation for the weekly AWS Senate meetings. "She fed me ideas," said Anne Hoopingarner Ritter, AWS president during the 1960–1961 academic year. "I knew exactly what I was supposed to do when I ran the meeting. . . . I felt very enabled and knowledgeable. Looking back, I was her disciple."³⁹ Taylor also hosted at her home receptions and an annual overnight retreat for the AWS Senate. Ritter remembered Taylor describing her views and educating the student leaders who attended these events. For instance, the 1960 retreat minutes record a conversation regarding "situations where men are given priority over women for no reason" and "equal chances for education opportunities, and in occupations after school." Ritter said Taylor often relied on female students to "market" her suggestions through their gossip networks. "She wasn't radical or confrontational; she co-opted us," reported Ritter, who added that Taylor subtly asked the women broad questions about their roles in society, their reasons for attending university, and their plans for their lives after graduation. Ritter said of Taylor's questions, "In her query was . . . a more forward looking agenda than I was aware."⁴⁰

Reflecting herself on her time at KU and on her general efforts to change the parietals, Taylor said she worked to move the students to implement changes. She also said, however, that "there was a limit to how far ahead of them [students] you could get."⁴¹ Taylor mentored by the Socratic method, encouraging the women to think critically about the parietal rules, to reconsider conventional roles for women, and to intellectually engage in the issues of sex equity. Taylor's interest in removing parietals stemmed from her belief that female students avoided scholarly inquiry because they spent

much of their time crafting and enforcing behavioral rules. She determined that until women dissolved this aspect of the AWS, the focus on scholarship and sex equity would be secondary at best.

Taylor began her efforts to shift student focus to scholarship by planning an experiment in student governance through a convention. At the 1958 spring retreat, during her second year at KU, Taylor convinced the AWS Senate to reconceive the parietals governing women. Taylor proposed a one-day convention of delegations from each living unit to determine new behavioral standards. In this activity, Taylor explicitly implemented her plan for student government by giving the women the opportunity to set their own policies regarding behavioral expectations.⁴² By the fall, a steering committee requested each living unit formulate a complete set of rules covering all areas of women's activities that its members believed the AWS should regulate. However, the delegations—beset by women who in their own words "could not forget about the old rules"—generated few new ideas.⁴³

Despite the opportunity to independently set their own guidelines at the convention, the women failed to accept the freedom offered by Taylor as they simply recreated existing curfews and male visiting privileges. The lack of new conceptions and approaches indicated that women at KU could not imagine themselves outside the structure of the parietals. Even the officers with whom Taylor met weekly found reconceptualizing the parietals to be difficult as the minutes frequently recorded the senate having trouble envisioning options for women's student life that were not controlled by the campus. In particular, when the AWS Convention began, the women—rather than embracing the opportunity to create their own rules—actually recommended less autonomy for themselves, voting to further limit restrictions by assigning approval for any curfew exceptions to the dean of women. This vote reversed one of the AWS constitutional revisions initiated by Taylor, in which she reassigned from her office the approval authority for rule exceptions to the housemothers or governing boards of the living units. With this move the dean of women made clear that she did not want the authority of

38. *Ibid.*

39. Ritter interview.

40. *Ibid.*; "AWS Senate Retreat Minutes," April, 26, 1960, 1959–1960 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12. 997, Lawrence, Kansas.

41. Taylor interview, December 13–14, 2003; Emily Taylor, interview by author, July 5, 1997, Lawrence, Kansas.

42. Taylor, "Optimum Use of Students in Faculty Committees," 126–29.

43. "Summary of New Ideas for AWS Regulations," January 15, 1959, 1958/59 folder; "AWS Convention Notes," February 3, 1959, 1958/59 folder; "1959 AWS Regulations Convention Chairman's Report," 1958/59 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12, 4–5.

the university to reinforce behavioral standards such as curfews. She wanted the women to manage themselves through their living groups. By reversing the decision in the convention, however, the students showed that they preferred that the university / dean of women define the curfew and the appropriate exceptions to it.

Despite the convention vote, the AWS Senate failed to ratify the reversal. This division over the rules illustrated the fundamental difference between Taylor's approach and students' overall preference. Taylor wanted the women in the living units to determine behavior standards for each dormitory or sorority. The women preferred to let the campus administration decide. Taylor believed this was due to women's reluctance to take responsibility for their own behavior. The women, experiencing college life amid strict gender role expectations and social norms that held to a sexual double standard, saw the rules as something to be broken when personal circumstances dictated, but also as a convenient and polite excuse for declining dates or unwanted sexual advances.⁴⁴

The convention resulted in only two notable changes to existing rules—extending the curfew during finals week to midnight and recommending senior privileges, the latter of which would permit senior women to operate outside the standard rules in limited situations.⁴⁵ These two convention recommendations needed the approval of the AWS Senate for adoption and this group of student leaders resisted endorsing both. First, because the library closed at 10 p.m., the senate contended that the midnight curfew would be irresponsible by giving the women two hours of unsupervised time with no scholastic purpose. In order to convince the officers to adopt the change, Taylor negotiated with the university administration for the library to remain open during finals week until 11 p.m. When the AWS finally agreed to the finals week curfew extension, Taylor structured it as an experiment that, if successful, would lay the groundwork for more expansive changes. Knowing that any enduring parietal adjustments depended upon women behaving reasonably, Taylor often reminded the students that “the whole group is responsible for the action of any individuals.”⁴⁶

Even with no incidents during finals week, the senate still balked at a permanent extension of the weeknight

curfew to midnight. They contended that women arriving home late at night would wake others in the residences. Taylor dismissed this argument by suggesting that the houses increase their quiet hours penalties to prevent potential disruption. Arguing that the early curfews limited women's studies, she arranged for more campus buildings to remain open later. Eight months after the convention, a brief note in the minutes for a September 1959 AWS meeting indicates that the hours had become permanent at the library and other halls.⁴⁷ This part of Taylor's “experiment” worked. The women accepted late weeknight hours, taking a small step toward autonomy and Taylor's goal that women should make their own behavioral decisions without relying on the rules as an excuse.

Approval for senior privileges took longer for Taylor to achieve. Although the convention voted to consider special freedoms for senior women due to their maturity, the AWS had little consensus on how to structure a plan. Prior to the convention, Taylor introduced to the senate the concept that senior women should carry keys for their residences. Taylor explained, “We were at this meeting and they were talking about these piddly little things, like 15 minutes here and half an hour there, and I just said, ‘Have you considered keys.’ It was an electrifying moment.” Taylor remembered that the women paused, “It took them a while [and they finally] asked ‘to the sorority house?’” as they slowly understood the dean's meaning.⁴⁸ The women found the idea of controlling their own hours foreign and continued to find it difficult to envision university life outside of *in loco parentis*.

Anne Ritter, who was president of the senate during the year AWS adopted keys, recalled that she resisted the change. She, like many other students, believed the women needed the rules to clarify their behavioral expectations. Ritter said Taylor finally convinced her to consider the keys by stressing that many women already circumvented the rules. “I was naïve. I thought everyone followed the rules,” said Ritter, remembering how Taylor proved her point. “[Taylor told me] ‘you think everyone is in at closing hours. Let's go visit the sororities and scholarship houses, bring treats and have a party and see.’” Ritter recalled driving Taylor around Lawrence one night after closing hours, stopping at each house

44. “AWS Senate Minutes,” February 24, 1959, 1958/59 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12.

45. “AWS Seeks Rules Change,” *University Daily Kansan*, February 16, 1959.

46. Clipping, *University Daily Kansan*, n.d., 1958/59 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12.

47. “AWS Senate Minutes,” March 3, 1959, and “AWS Senate Minutes,” April 21, 1959, 1958/59 folder; “AWS Board of Standards Minutes,” September 24, 1959, 1959/60 folder; clipping, *University Daily Kansan*, n.d., 1958/59 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12, which stated that the chief of the Library Reader Services would consider longer hours permanently but that it was not easily done.

48. Emily Taylor, interview by author, July 3, 1997, Lawrence, Kansas.



Even by 1966, after senior women at KU had held keys to their own residences for six years, there was uproar when Taylor proposed doing away with closing hours for younger female students. Many students, parents, and fellow university administrators voiced their complaints to Chancellor Wescoe, including the advisor to Pi Beta Phi, members of which are pictured here in their campus residence. When Wescoe told Taylor that her plans were too controversial, she responded, "I think you have the wrong dean of women so I'll put in my resignation." Photo courtesy of the Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas Libraries, Lawrence.

and announcing that the dean of women was there with refreshments, and inviting everyone down to the lobby. "Half of everyone was gone," said Ritter, remembering that the sign-out sheets recorded them in the residence. Ritter said this finally clarified for her that a number of women avoided the rules when it suited them. Taylor contended that it would be safer for women if they did not hide their whereabouts. For instance, Taylor said that a couple died from carbon monoxide poisoning at a "lover's lane." In this case, sorority members noticed the student missing, but no one knew where she was.⁴⁹

Taylor recognized that although KU women ignored the rules in many cases, they preferred to retain the regulations so that they did not have to take full ownership of their personal decisions. Accustomed to the rules providing a convenient way to manipulate men and dating, the women did not want to directly confront men with their desire to go home from a date or to avoid sexual activity. The students preferred to blame the rules as the reason they wanted out of the situation. Although few women voluntarily told

49. Taylor interview, December 13–14, 2003.

Taylor why they regularly broke the rules, the fact that Taylor's office oversaw discipline left little question as to how women manipulated regulations. Disciplinary case after disciplinary case regarding women breaking the rules involved sexual activity. Ritter remembered that Taylor often said that the women hid "behind the curfew so you don't have to make safe decisions for yourself."⁵⁰ Taylor's former assistant Donna Shavlik recalled the issue similarly: "She [Taylor] pushed the seniors [to have keys]. They didn't want them. . . . I always hate this extreme language, but I guess it really is true, [there was] such oppression of women that they had bought into it. So women students who did not set their own hours used it [curfew] for excuses [to return to the dorm or sorority while] on dates and it kept them from having to make decisions themselves."⁵¹ As Shavlik noted, women used the rules as an excuse to

50. Ritter interview. As noted earlier, Taylor destroyed her files at KU. However, Dean of Men Don Alderson kept extensive files on disciplinary actions that involved men that illustrated such instances.

51. Donna Shavlik, interview by author, September 20, 1997, Lawrence, Kansas.

extricate themselves from situations with men that they did not want to face directly. Conversely, women who determined to forgo the normative restrictions broke the rules purposely. In either case, the rules allowed women to avoid accountability for their own behavior and the reality of developing their own preferences and making their own choices.

By the fall of 1960, the AWS Board of Standards asked each residence group to recommend senior privilege options it would like considered for the seniors living in their facility. This request explicitly called for each group to consider keys as a possibility. Of the sixteen living group responses, only six—just 37 percent—supported some type of key program. Another three groups preferred one key for occasional use but indicated only limited support for even this idea, with one residence noting that their senior women had very few problems with the current system. The remaining seven rejected keys altogether and asked for an arrangement for later hours with someone maintaining “door duty” in order to let seniors in at night. In fact, the Sigma Kappa sorority responded that, “They [members] also felt the idea of keys for seniors was a little too lenient and a bit dangerous, as well as costly if keys were lost and locks had to be changed.”⁵² With over 60 percent of the housing groups against keys, the responses clearly illustrate that the students did not instigate a change at KU to provide women more freedom and accountability for their behavior. Without Taylor’s introduction of the concept to the AWS leadership group, it is likely the parietals would have continued, unquestioned and accepted by students.

Despite the women’s reservations, AWS approved the key program as “experimental” and called for evaluation of the use of keys at the end of one semester. The plan required written parental permission to participate and did not actually provide each senior student with a key for her possession at all times. Instead, in yet another example of the women’s resistance, the AWS created a knot of rules governing key checkout. Female student leaders developed very complicated rules to regulate the use of the keys under the auspices of safety. Clearly, protecting the reputations of women and their living groups drove the hesitation over free use of keys.

First, the women determined that seniors would lock keys in a box kept by the house director during the day and that keys would be checked out only after 5:00 p.m.

52. Recommendations received by AWS for senior privilege plan, July–November 1961 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12.

and before the house closed for the night. Locking the keys made it clear that the keys were not always available. Second, the name of the senior, the person accompanying the senior, and her expected time of return continued to be recorded in a revised version of the “sign-out” sheets standard at all university women’s housing. Keeping such a record showed that seniors were still expected to be going to appropriate and disclosed locations. Third, seniors counted the keys by 8:00 a.m. daily and no one younger than a senior could enter the house with a key. Any “irregularity” resulted in the loss of senior privileges for the noncompliant woman and possibly for the entire house. If a woman lost a key, the residence members changed the locks on the same day and all seniors shared in the cost of replacing the lock and keys. Along with answering arguments about safety, these precautions also illustrated that keys would be closely supervised so that younger women could not access them.⁵³ Despite the rules, the key program resulted in senior women receiving complete freedom to return to their residences at whatever hour they preferred before 8:00 a.m. the next morning, so long as they left before closing hours began for the underclassmen. Consistently emphasizing that the program was for seniors and run by them, Taylor placed behavioral standards squarely in the hands of KU’s women whether they wanted that autonomy or not.⁵⁴

Taylor’s approach to women’s student governance called into question national norms regarding women’s student life. Between 1956 and 1960, the *Journal of the National Association of Deans of Women* published no articles dealing specifically with the subjects of closing hours, rules and regulations, or judiciary boards. Although the topic formally arose at least once at a National Association of Deans of Women Convention, parietals were not visible in the scholarly discussions of student individual responsibility, likely because they were considered a normative necessity.⁵⁵ At regional and national IAWS conferences, Taylor called to limit parietals on the grounds that they

53. “Seniors Hours in Effect Soon,” *University Daily Kansan*, October 14, 1960; “AWS Senate Minutes,” October 4, 1960, July–November 1961 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12.

54. “Keys May Be Distributed Monday,” *University Daily Kansan*, September 27, 1961.

55. In 1955 a National Association of Deans of Women survey of members ranked housing problems as the top issue of concern. Conversely, it ranked student government and student leaders near the bottom of concerns with women’s education issues last. Eisenmann, *Higher Education for Women in Postwar America*, 135.

interfered with women's studying opportunities. She also suggested that the focus on conduct kept women from intellectual conversation and more substantial leadership opportunities.

Ritter, who attended the 1958 and 1959 national IAWS conferences with Taylor, recalled that IAWS meeting attendees often found Taylor's suggestions shocking. Ritter said she realized that KU was "way ahead" of the norm at these meetings. One KU undergraduate noted that, "There is probably fear in some schools that students would misuse any such power given them. Kansas is known as a liberal school, and one finds at any convention that many problems of other schools have long been solved at KU."⁵⁶ Taylor repeatedly reminded IAWS and her own AWS group that parietals—a manifestation of proscribed gender roles—stood in the way of progress for women. In the records of a 1960 AWS retreat, the secretary summarized Taylor's comments by noting, "Our society is being changed by the large numbers of women who work outside the home. . . . We want to get women to think about important intellectual things instead of just closing hours."⁵⁷ Clearly, Dean Taylor thought parietals prohibited the more progressive approach she wished to pursue regarding the status of women in the United States.

Information regarding the reception of the senior key program is sparse. When asked about the response of the KU administration to her plan, Taylor replied, "I didn't ask their opinions. . . . They didn't say anything. Well, if they did, it's nothing I remember. They [the administration] certainly didn't oppose it." The archival files support Taylor's contention. There is nothing to indicate concern in the chancellor's, the dean of students', or the dean of men's files. In fact, aside from a final report on the senior privilege plan in Murphy's files, it would have been impossible to know that either the convention or the issuance of keys occurred from his records. As for parents of seniors, AWS Senate minutes note at various points in the process that none had rejected the privilege for their own daughters.⁵⁸ Criticism

existed, however. Taylor remembered sorority advisors, usually off-campus alumnae, as particularly upset:

I remember one woman [advisor] who invited me to go out to lunch and she said that she wanted to know if I could explain to her why I thought that [the key program] was progress. And I said I think this is progress because it requires people to grow up. It requires people to make their own decisions as to when it's time for them to be out and when it's time for them to be in [the sorority house], the same as anything else they do whether they are studying or eating or sleeping or what. Those decisions shouldn't be made by someone else.⁵⁹

Thus, Taylor believed educated women should be "grown up" and possess the decision-making skills to act autonomously and determine their own path rather than to operate solely by convention or by the dictates of authority.

In initiating the senior privileges discussion in 1958 and implementing them in fall of 1960, Taylor preceded the national conversation on roles for educated women. It was not until 1963 that Betty Friedan published *Feminine Mystique* suggesting that white, middle-class, educated women found domesticity unfulfilling. Further, equal employment guarantees did not arrive until 1964 with the Civil Rights Act. Three months before President John F. Kennedy established the President's Commission on the Status of Women in December 1961, Taylor dispersed keys to seniors at KU. By January 1962 Taylor moved forward by suggesting elimination of closing hours for *all* women except freshmen (thereby issuing them keys as well). This was two years before the president's commission reported its results and four and a half years before the National Organization of Women formed in 1966.⁶⁰

The closer Taylor moved toward keys for all women, the more disapproval she faced. AWS Senate leaders

56. "AWS Senate Minutes," November 27, 1960, November 1960–June 1961 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12; Ritter interview.

57. "AWS Senate Retreat Minutes," April 26, 1960, Taylor's home, 1959/60 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12.

58. Taylor interview, July 5, 1997; "AWS Senate Minutes," October 25, 1960, July–October 1960 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12. The only evidence of a negative public response was a note in the AWS Senate minutes stating that an article, "Equal Rights Set for KU's Women," in the *Lawrence Daily Journal-World*, October 6, 1960, was "erroneous and unfavorable." "AWS Senate Minutes," October 11, 1960, July–October 1960 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12.

59. Emily Taylor, interview by author, July 1, 1997, Lawrence, Kansas.

60. By 1965 a student-led civil rights protest emerged at KU over off-campus housing discrimination, preferential treatment of white education graduates for employment as teachers in the Kansas City metropolitan area, and fraternity and sorority membership. Taylor chaired the campus committee that reviewed those complaints and recommended campus changes to deal with the racial discrimination. For further discussion see Lisa E. Wolf-Wendel et al., *Reflecting Back, Looking Forward: Civil Rights and Student Affairs* ([Washington, D.C.]: National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Inc., 2004), 295–308.

overwhelmingly rejected her 1962 call to provide keys to underclassmen on the grounds that parents would not approve, that it was “idealistic,” and that closing hours kept “KU as a respected leader in the Big 8 and the Midwest.”⁶¹ Taylor eventually overcame student objections against eliminating curfews for younger women, though not before Murphy left KU to become chancellor at the University of California, Los Angeles. In March 1966, the AWS Rules Convention voted to give keys to all female students from second-semester sophomores to seniors and to eliminate the closing hours and sign-outs for these women altogether.⁶² The result would be the autonomy Taylor had worked to accomplish.

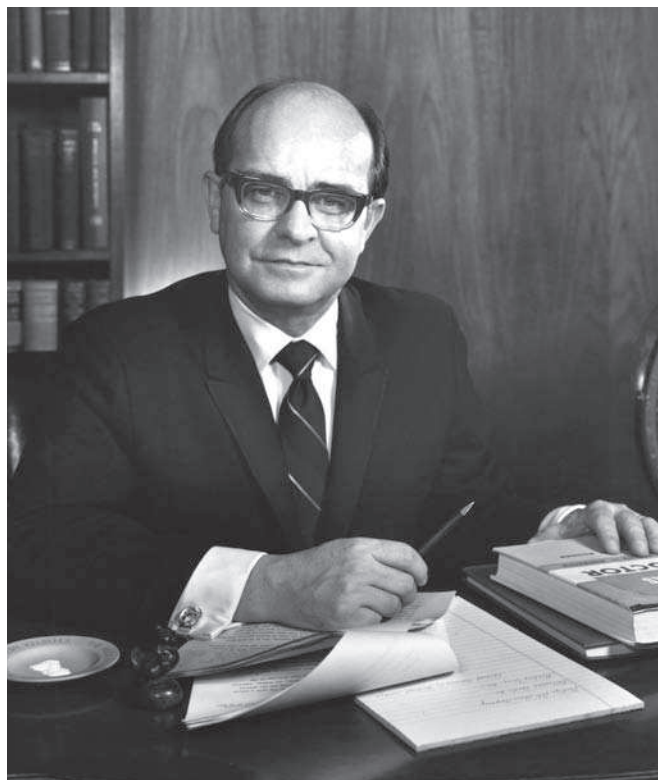
This news was reported in a national climate that had recently “discovered” the campus organizational movements of the New Left. In the early winter months of 1965, the popular media had begun covering the Students for a Democratic Society with the Free Speech Movement protest at the University of California, Berkeley. By the spring of 1965, *Newsweek*, *Time*, *U.S. News & World Report*, as well as the *Nation* and *Saturday Evening Post*, had covered the Berkeley protest, which catapulted the topic of student governance structures into the national conversation.⁶³ Thus, the AWS vote in favor of abolishing closing hours for younger KU women made news across Kansas. The *Wichita Eagle*, *Lawrence Daily Journal-World*, *Kansas City Star*, and *Topeka Daily Capital* all carried the story. In Topeka, a front-page article detailed the entire plan, which needed approval from the new chancellor, W. Clarke Wescoe. Statewide media caught the attention of parents and Kansas citizens who wrote Wescoe. Not one of the many letters in Wescoe’s files at the KU archives reflects a positive sentiment. Instead, the correspondents condemned the proposal and encouraged Wescoe to stop it.⁶⁴

61. “AWS Minutes,” joint meeting of the AWS House and Senate, January 9, 1962, November 1961–June 1962 folder, AWS Records, UA, RG 67/12.

62. See Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland*, 86–104, for a complete discussion of the rules revisions in 1966. Bailey examined the changes in parietals at KU, arguing that the sexual revolution had roots within student personnel counseling and its support for personal responsibility. Bailey noted that Taylor must have been supportive of the women’s changes in order to assure their success. However, she suggested that the students “co-opted” the administration’s philosophy regarding creation of responsible Cold War adults to advocate for their own rule changes.

63. Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching*, 26–27.

64. Judy Farrell, “Studied at KU Hour Reforms,” *Topeka Sunday Capital-Journal*, March 20, 1966. Letters to the chancellor are primarily collected in Student Correspondence (Change in Women’s Closing Hours) 1965/66, Box 11, Chancellor’s Office, W. Clarke Wescoe, University Archives, RG 2.12.5, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence (hereafter cited as “Wescoe Papers, UA, RG 2/12/5”).



Chancellor W. Clarke Wescoe fielded many of the complaints leveled against Taylor and her plans to provide female students at KU with keys to their residences. Not one of the letters kept in Wescoe’s files at the KU archives reflects a positive sentiment. Over and over, however, Wescoe responded that the decision regarding keys and closing hours would not be “capricious” and that his action would reflect “reasonableness for all.” When Taylor threatened to resign after Wescoe suggested she was trying to change too much too soon, the chancellor capitulated and by 1969 all women’s closing rules were dissolved. Photo courtesy of the Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas Libraries, Lawrence.

These letters reveal that many saw Taylor behind the changes and linked them to national concerns. For instance, Mrs. Scott Ashton wrote:

in a more critical vein, may I go on record as being against all the changes proposed by AWS concerning closing hours. Scott [her husband] says to include him in this too. We feel that the whole trend is a terrible mistake, as has been pretty well proven wherever this idiocy has been allowed. The first mistake at K.U., in my opinion, was the senior keys. From the beginning the girls seem to have had unusually poor advice.⁶⁵

65. Mrs. Scott Ashton, Shawnee Mission, Kansas, to Wescoe, April 28, 1966, Student Correspondence (Change in Women’s Closing Hours), Wescoe Papers, UA, RG 2/12/5.

Direct critiques of Taylor's advising were not always so politely stated, and many illustrated frustration with Taylor's unconventional ideas. For instance, another mother bluntly stated in her letter to Wescoe:

Come now, Dr. Wescoe, you surely don't think that I am naïve enough to think that the little darlings thought up this whole new world all by themselves. I loved your phrasing "does not of necessity represent the views of the Dean." You see, I feel sure that little suggestions have been dropped at those sweet little fudge or dessert parties at [Taylor's] home that I have been hearing about for years. Surely, the idiotic conception of Senior Keys was hers, as no one is allowed to discuss dropping that idea. In fact, at a Panhel [*sic*] rush meeting last year, she informed the Pi Phi representatives that she felt it was not the Mother's club business to discuss Senior Keys. Ha! [A]nd now they [female students] are allowed to vote on having no closing hours. Did Dean Emily anticipate they would vote against? Or is she still using that juvenile homily, "Don't you trust your daughter?"⁶⁶

Letter after letter sent to Wescoe and other administrators express sentiments like: "abolition of closing hours . . . it's like letting the tail wag the dog! Why not let the parents and/or taxpayers who foot the bill have a voice in this."⁶⁷ In one case a citizen complained that the dissolution of regulations for women would hurt men by distracting them from their studies:

By nature, girls are usually more aggressive than boys and are prone to monopolize the boy's time. We have heard male students at KU speak out in disapproval of the proposed relaxation of closing hours as they will now have no legitimate excuse to return the girls to their houses and get back to their own for study and duties. Generally, the boys carry a heavier academic load. As far as their health

is concerned they don't get enough rest now to do justice to their packed schedules so we don't see how it would be possible for them to do their best work under the circumstances proposed.⁶⁸

The subtext of letters like the ones above illustrated concern over unsupervised dating time and opportunity for sexual relations. Amid comments regarding "'rebels' influencing policy" more than one parent complained that this dissolution of parietals would lead to illegitimate births and the need for a campus nursery. One letter begins, "Dear Dr. Wescoe, I am enclosing two clippings from the morning paper. Thought the AWS might be interested in planning a nursery for their next project."⁶⁹ In addition to parent and citizen protests, Taylor remembered a legislator complaining that she had used state resources to encourage "insurgents." Over and over, Wescoe responded that the decision would not be "capricious" and that his action would reflect "reasonableness for all."⁷⁰ He also regularly cited the success of the senior keys and the lack of problems with those as evidence that the 1966 plan had merit.

In the late spring of 1966, Wescoe succumbed to the political pressure and called Taylor into his office after a particularly difficult call from the Pi Beta Phi sorority advisor. He told Taylor expanding the keys to more students and eliminating all closing hours/signing out procedures at the same time was too controversial and indicated he would not support the plan. She remembers responding, "I think you have the wrong dean of women so I'll put in my resignation." Wescoe capitulated to Taylor's threat of departure, and that same evening he cancelled a dinner in Kansas City to invite Taylor to dine at his home in order to work out arrangements for accepting the policy changes that put a

68. Mr. and Mrs. Melford Monsees, Leawood, Kansas, to Mrs. John Hughes, Lawrence, Kansas, Chairman Pi Phi Advisory Board with carbon copy to Chancellor W. Clarke Wescoe, April 13, 1966, Student Correspondence (Change in Women's Closing Hours), Wescoe Papers, UA, RG 2/12/5.

69. Jackie Tietze to Wescoe, March 14, 1966; Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Powers, Wichita, Kansas, to Provost James R. Surface, March 16, 1966, Student Correspondence (Change in Women's Closing Hours), Wescoe Papers, UA, RG 2/12/5.

70. Taylor interview, December 13–14, 2003; Wescoe to Mr. Roy A. Edwards, Mrs. Harold S. Warwick, Mrs. Ramon Schumacher, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Robert Goetze, Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Burgardt, Mrs. John H. Tietze, Mrs. Thomas Van Cleave, Mrs. John D. Crouch, Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Powers, and Mrs. Gordon E. Atha, April 12, 1966, Student Correspondence (Change in Women's Closing Hours), Wescoe Papers, UA, RG 2/12/5. Additional letters from Wescoe in response to other citizens contain very similar statements.

66. Jackie Tietze, Shawnee Mission, Kansas, to Wescoe, April 12, 1966, Student Correspondence (Change in Women's Closing Hours), Wescoe Papers, UA, RG 2/12/5.

67. Mrs. Perry Fleagle, Wichita, Kansas, to Provost James Surface, March 15, 1966, Student Correspondence (Change in Women's Closing Hours), Wescoe Papers, UA, RG 2/12/5.



When asked by one of her detractors to explain her commitment to providing female students with keys, Taylor replied that it required “people to grow up. It requires people to make their own decisions as to when it’s time for them to be out and when it’s time for them to be in, the same as anything else they do whether they are studying or eating or sleeping or what. Those decisions shouldn’t be made by someone else.” Photo courtesy of the Lawrence Journal-World.

stop to her resignation.⁷¹ In the end, sophomore women remained under closing hours while junior and senior women received key privileges. In addition, all women’s closing rules were dissolved by 1969.

Taylor believed that Wescoe did not want her to resign because he “was afraid of a real uprising” if she left. Taylor stated that, “I had a great many friends who would have raised trouble.” Primarily, she felt her base of support rested in both male and female students. “I suppose I should have been concerned [about these changes], but I wasn’t. I didn’t even ask their [the dean of men’s and the chancellor’s] opinion. It seemed so reasonable to give the keys. . . . We ended up the only school in the country who had given keys to everyone first.”⁷² Clearly, as Taylor incrementally challenged conventional gender roles, she faced increasing protests with each step. While she had the unconditional support of Murphy, Taylor did not find the same support in Wescoe, and had to negotiate his agreement with her agenda. Taylor commented privately more than once in a wry manner that she “educated” Wescoe on women’s issues. With Taylor’s threat of

resignation, perhaps a part of that “education” rested in showing him that dissolving the authority and structure of parietals would mean reexamining conventional understandings of the dean of women’s role as well.

Within the context of holistic student personnel counseling, Taylor saw KU women’s narrow focus on parietals as a barrier that required removal before female students could reach their full potential. Taylor used student government to advance a feminist agenda that questioned gender roles and their manifestation as formal rules and regulations. As an administrator, she seeded the women’s movement at KU, despite resistance from students who had adopted the culture of *in loco parentis* and believed they needed to be supervised by others rather than making their own personal decisions. Taylor used student deference to her authority to implement a liberal feminist agenda by challenging female students to reconsider the regulations that governed their actions, constructed their gender identities, and circumscribed their place on campus and in society. At a state-funded institution like KU, Taylor had to advance these changes in a manner that could be accepted by Kansas citizens. To this end she began a series of “experiments” and promoted their success as proof that the system of regulations could be eliminated.

By 1966, Taylor’s activities at KU overlapped with student protests at other campuses like Berkeley. Her work set an example for other schools as the key plan caught attention on at least one other campus.⁷³ These cultivated “experiments” were minor, incremental steps toward social change that show how feminist activism took place in the consensus culture of the 1950s and early 1960s on a college campus before the social disruptions of the counter-culture and New Left erupted across the nation. Taylor treaded slowly, proved her success, and then enlarged the project to work toward her goal. It was a liberal feminist strategy that worked in the heartland of the United States. Taylor’s case illustrates that the usual history of higher education regarding campus protest may need to be recast to allow for more administrator involvement. At KU, Taylor fostered an environment amenable to the “second wave” of the women’s movement on the campus. Equally important, Taylor’s activism calls into question the presumption that students initiated rebellion against administrators and *in loco parentis* in all cases. [KH]

71. Taylor interview, December 13–14, 2003. Taylor would stay at KU until 1975 when she retired to take a post at the American Council on Education directing the Office of Women in Higher Education.

72. Taylor interview, December 13–14, 2003; Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland*, 100, 102.

73. The campus paper at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, published an editorial that called for the dean of women on its campus to consider the same program for its students in “Dorm Keys for Senior Women,” *Massachusetts Collegian*, October 31, 1960.